

The Nature Conservancy International Conservation Program—Latin America and Caribbean Region

Mission, Goals, and Objectives of the Community Conservation Program

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Mission, Goals, and Objectives of the Community Conservation Program

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
MISSION	2
GENERAL PRINCIPLES	2
GOALS 3	
Goal 1: Leverage Lessons Across Sites to Build Alliances for Community Conservation.....	3
Goal 2: Build Community Conservation Capacity for the Conservation Process.....	4
Goal 3: Promote the Integration of Community Conservation into the Philosophy and Practice of the Latin America and Caribbean Region of the International Conservation Program.....	6
Goal 4: Raise Funds to Implement the Goals and Objectives of the Community Conservation Program.....	8
REFERENCES AND GUIDING DOCUMENTS	9

MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. Its conservation goal is “the long-term survival of all viable native species and community types through the design and conservation of portfolios of sites within ecoregions.” Community conservation is an approach used by the Conservancy to reach this goal.

As established in “Conservation by Design,” a guiding document of the Conservancy, *community conservation refers to the interaction of conservation and human populations to “build a conservation ethic where people understand that their well-being depends on the health of ecological systems and that economic growth and community development must be compatible with maintaining the health of these systems.”* (“Conservation by Design”) It is based on the premise expressed by John Sawhill, Conservancy President, that success in long-term conservation depends on “unleashing the enormous latent power of a community’s love of place.” (Sawhill)

Communities, no matter at what level, share a social identity based on common culture or values. Nevertheless, they may be heterogeneous in many ways—income and education levels, religion, ethnicity, gender balance. (Chung) Community conservation recognizes the various levels and definitions of community—those within an ecoregion or a protected area or on its borders; urban constituencies; and the broader regional, national, and international communities that support conservation efforts. Therefore, from a historical concentration at the site level, community conservation has important roles to play at larger geographic and institutional scales. Issues of migration, population pressures, and determinant socio-political structures are crucial elements for the long-term goal of conservation.

Practitioners of community conservation work at the site level in collaboration with community stakeholders using participatory methods to facilitate local decision making and to provide technical assistance and training. This community approach respects the needs, values, and traditions of communities, and emphasizes equity and transparency. It also calls for understanding the dynamics of cultural and ethnic diversity, recognizing the importance of a gender perspective in natural resource management. At the regional and international scales, practitioners promote a participatory community conservation approach through the support of research, policy reform, information exchange, documentation, technical assistance, and training via coalitions and inter-institutional collaboration.

Community conservation provides fora for strategic thinking and innovation in considering the human dimension of conservation. It provides information for conservation decision making by supporting research, harvesting lessons learned, and making technical resources

available to partners, staff, and communities. Overall, community conservation promotes an approach to increase the participation of communities in protected area management in collaboration with partner organizations, staff, and alliance members.

MISSION

The Nature Conservancy's fundamental approach to conservation is embodied in the conservation process—ecoregional and country planning to select sites, site conservation planning to develop strategies, conservation action at sites, and measuring success. How to strategically understand and effectively address the human dimension within conservation requires innovation in learning about local communities' needs and interests, creative partnering with non-traditional agencies, sharing knowledge and resources, and disciplined application of this knowledge within the conservation process. The community conservation approach provides methods for participatory definition and implementation of strategies for threat abatement as well as monitoring of target health, stakeholder participation, and human community impacts, all of which can reduce costs and strengthen local ownership of the conservation process.

The Community Conservation Program's mission is to work with Conservancy staff and partners to understand the relationship of people and communities to biodiversity in the places where we work, engage them in actions to improve the health of this biodiversity, and advocate this approach at regional and international scales.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- The goals and objectives of the Community Conservation Program are developed through a participatory process with Conservancy staff and partners and are based on lessons learned within the Conservancy's conservation process.
- The substantive themes chosen for Program workshops, publications, research, and development are identified through the conservation process across sites.
- The Program works in collaboration with regional, central, and U.S. partnership programs.

Goals of the Community Conservation Program

- Leverage Lessons Across Sites to Build Alliances for Community Conservation
- Build Community Conservation Capacity for the Conservation Process
- Promote the Integration of Community Conservation into the Philosophy and Practice of the Latin America and Caribbean Region of the International Conservation Program
- Raise Funds to Implement the Goals and Objectives of the Community Conservation Program

GOALS

Goal 1: Leverage Lessons Across Sites to Build Alliances for Community Conservation

To have a broader and more lasting impact in building and strengthening community conservation capacity, the Program will capture, summarize, and disseminate the knowledge and experience of Conservancy staff and partners in working with communities and protected area management. The Program will complement Conservancy experiences by highlighting innovations in the community conservation field at large.

Objective 1.1—Aggregate and Analyze Site Data on Community Conservation

To effectively build alliances and leverage lessons, the Program must have a thorough and active understanding of the work of Conservancy staff and partners.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Develop comparative site matrix to identify and prioritize Program actions; and
- Develop a database for tracking community conservation projects at Conservancy sites to identify case studies, potential exchanges, and common themes for research.

Objective 1.2—Facilitate Exchanges

To increase shared lessons and foster community conservation alliances across sites, the Program will facilitate exchanges among partners and staff in the International Conservation Program and with the U.S. partnership.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Establish an exchange fund;
- Coordinate with regional exchanges; and
- Facilitate international-domestic exchanges.

Objective 1.3—Sponsor Thematic Workshops

Through the site conservation planning process, the Program will select cutting edge community conservation strategies and bring partners together to share and evaluate the effectiveness of their conservation strategies and their contributions to threat abatement.

Illustrative Workshop Topics

- Link beekeeping or shade coffee to threat abatement;
- Build site-based coalitions for community conservation; and
- Strengthen conservation leadership among women and youth.

Objective 1.4—Document Lessons Learned and Best Practices in Community Conservation

To strengthen community conservation capacity among partners and staff, the Community Conservation Program will facilitate partner and staff publications, apply them to new program development, and disseminate them to those interested.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Design and maintain a Program webpage; and
- Facilitate staff and partner publication of experiences across sites and themes.

Objective 1.5—Create and Sustain Community Conservation Alliances

To foster alliances and collaboration among the Program, Conservancy staff, partners, community coalitions, and service providers, the Program will participate in strategic networks of community conservation practitioners and service providers for information exchange, technical assistance, training, and research.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Compile database of service providers to be shared with regional staff and partners;
- Participate in Conservancy and global conservation fora; and
- Take leadership in the Community Conservation Coalition, MERGE, and other established networks.

Goal 2: Build Community Conservation Capacity for the Conservation Process

Long-term successful implementation of the conservation process relies on fulfilling the essential roles that community conservation has in each of the four steps—ecoregional planning and country strategies, site conservation planning, conservation actions, and measures of success.

Objective 2.1—Support Ecoregional Planning

The Program will build capacity for understanding the complexities of human population and land use dynamics, analyzing these components and incorporating them into ecoregional plans.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Define and implement minimum standards and guidelines for human population and land use analysis as part of the country strategy guidelines and ecoregional plans; and
- Define strategies to build regional and partner capacity to produce population-environment overlays.

Objective 2.2—Support Site Conservation Planning

The Program will build capacity in the community conservation approach to inform site conservation planning, seeking to integrate the human dimension and participatory methods in the planning process.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Ensure integration of community conservation issues in site conservation planning manuals, workbooks, and training workshops;
- Disseminate and test community conservation tools for site conservation planning; and
- Improve participatory processes in human context analyses, stakeholder analyses, and situation diagrams.

Objective 2.3—Support Conservation Actions

In this phase of the conservation process, the Program will assist in the elaboration and assessment of strategy effectiveness via comparative analyses and networking and by collaborating with other Conservancy programs and institutional partners on cutting-edge methods and issues.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Build capacity for community-level coalition building by defining strategies to collaborate with other Conservancy programs and institutional partners to share best practices and build cross-program initiatives; and
- Assist in the design of community conservation actions based on site conservation planning results.

Objective 2.4—Support Measures of Success

The Program will build staff capability and partner capacity to design and implement appropriate periodic analyses of data to contribute to measuring success at both the site and ecoregional scales.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Develop and test participatory community monitoring protocols;
- Develop trend analyses of human population and land use indicators; and
- Assist in the design of monitoring and evaluation models for community conservation actions.

Objective 2.5—Support Innovative Research, Development, and Policy Analysis

The Program will contribute to the conservation process by bringing together the latest learning in and critical reflection on community conservation issues for strengthened application at site, ecoregional, and institutional levels.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Collaborate with university faculty and graduate students in cutting-edge research on community conservation issues at sites; and
- Recommend policies and practices on human population dynamics, resettlement around protected areas, and gender in conservation.

Goal 3: Promote the Integration of Community Conservation into the Philosophy and Practice of the Latin America and Caribbean Region of the International Conservation Program

The core documents of The Nature Conservancy underscore the importance of community conservation, especially in developing a conservation ethic that affirms the link between a healthy environment, human prosperity, and compatible development. The Program seeks to more fully integrate a community conservation philosophy and practice within the Conservancy.

Objective 3.1—Ensure that Core Conservancy Documents Reflect Community Conservation

The Conservancy produces many documents, including country strategy guidelines; revisions, such as the second edition of the *Geography of Hope*; the Conservancy magazine;

and the newsletter, *Global Currents*. The Program will collaborate with various departments to ensure that these and other documents reflect the Conservancy's commitment to community conservation and promote site experiences.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Identify key people in the writing teams with whom to collaborate; and
- Identify Latin American and Caribbean site examples for Conservancy publications.

Objective 3.2—Build Awareness of Community Conservation among Program and Senior Staff

The Program will build awareness of community conservation through a variety of both established and special fora within the Conservancy.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Represent and promote community conservation in the Emerging Issues team, Renewable Energy Working Group, the International Management Committee, and other Conservancy teams and managerial groups; and
- Establish and implement Program lunch-time seminars.

Objective 3.3—Facilitate Community Conservation Staffing in the International Conservation Program through Recruitment and Professional Development

The Program will define strategies to meet regional and partner staffing and professional development needs in community conservation.

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Collaboratively define and catalyze full staffing for community conservation;
- Support definition of hiring criteria and guidelines for divisional community conservation directors and partner organizations; and
- Promote opportunities for professional development in community conservation of International Conservation Program staff and partners.

Goal 4: Raise Funds to Implement the Goals and Objectives of the Community Conservation Program

The Program seeks to develop a solid and vibrant financial base of support by engaging non-traditional funding sources, individuals, foundations, and corporations by marketing the unique aspects of community conservation and by engaging in creative, collaborative fundraising efforts with Conservancy programs and institutional partners.

Objective 4.1—Collaborate with the Conservation Science Development Officer to Define Short, Medium, and Long-term Fundraising Strategies

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Link programmatic needs with targeted funding sources;
- Identify and develop links between the Program and Conservancy state chapters;
- Identify fundraising opportunities and goals for Program staff; and
- Design, produce, and distribute brochures, fact sheets, and videos, and other effective fundraising tools for the Program.

Objective 4.2—Provide Training Opportunities for Program Staff to Develop Proposal Writing and Fundraising Skills

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Encourage program staff to participate in Conservancy and other fundraising training opportunities workshops, including Moves Management and donor visit training; and
- Assist program staff in becoming knowledgeable about the resources available through other departments and mechanisms for fundraising.

Objective 4.3—Collaborate with other Conservancy Programs and Partner Organizations on Funding Opportunities

Illustrative Mechanisms

- Strengthen the Program role in collaborative fundraising with other Conservancy programs; and
- Identify and pursue opportunities for collaborative fundraising via alliances and coalitions.

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